

VZCZCXRO9655

RR RUEHCD RUEHGD RUEHHO RUEHMC RUEHNG RUEHNL RUEHRD RUEHRS RUEHTM
DE RUEHME #2238/01 2102309
ZNY CCCCC ZZH
R 292309Z JUL 09
FM AMEMBASSY MEXICO
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 7650
INFO RUEHXC/ALL US CONSULATES IN MEXICO COLLECTIVE
RHMFISS/DEPT OF JUSTICE WASHINGTON DC
RUEHC/DEPT OF LABOR WASHINGTON DC
RUEATRS/DEPT OF TREASURY WASHINGTON DC
RUCPDO/DEPT OF COMMERCE WASHINGTON DC
RHMFISS/CDR USSOUTHCOM MIAMI FL
RHMFISS/HQ USNORTHCOM
RHMFISS/DEPT OF HOMELAND SECURITY WASHINGTON DC
RUEABND/DEA HQS WASHINGTON DC
RHEHAAA/NSC WASHINGTON DC

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 MEXICO 002238

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 07/20/2019

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [PHUM](#) [PINR](#) [KCRM](#) [SNAR](#) [MX](#)

SUBJECT: U.S. AND MEXICAN MILITARY COORDINATION ON HUMAN RIGHTS

Classified By: Acting Political Minister Counselor James P. Merz for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

¶1. (SBU) Summary. Although the Mexican military shies away from addressing human rights issues publicly, SEDENA has taken a number of steps to improve its record and promote human rights. The U.S. has contributed to these efforts through a number of programs to which the Mexican military has proven gradually more receptive. In both Mexico and the U.S., the human rights community is increasingly focused on the Mexican military's human rights performance. We will need to find creative ways to tailor our outreach to the Mexican military, promoting cultural exchanges which will not only foster greater respect for human rights but also more openness to addressing these sensitive issues in public. End Summary.

SEDENA's Evolving Efforts

¶2. (SBU) SEDENA has taken a number of measures to promote greater respect for human rights. In January 2008, it created the Human Rights Directorate to serve as the institution's lead office on human rights matters, including human rights promotion and the investigation of alleged abuses. Separately, SEDENA has developed a human rights training regimen aimed at infusing a human rights culture throughout the military. Course-work in medical examination and the documentation of torture, forensic investigation, human rights of women, and human rights for military attorneys form the basic foundation of the program. SEDENA holds regular conferences designed to enhance military professionalism and promote respect for human rights. It also annually participates in a conference series in support of the GOM's national program for equality between women and men. In 2007, SEDENA held 15 courses on human rights and international humanitarian rights in which 1,066 personnel were trained. In that same year SEDENA participated in 284 conferences that 59,880 people attended. Lastly, SEDENA includes in its operations orders directives to promote respect for human rights during maneuvers.

U.S. Programs Expanding

¶3. (SBU) Separately, the USG provides a significant amount of human rights training to the Mexican military. In FY2008, the Office of Defense Coordination (ODC) in Embassy Mexico City provided \$4.4 million of professional military education (PME) and technical training under the categories of International Military Education and Training (IMET), Counter Terrorism Fellowship Program (CTFP) and Counter Drug (CD) Operations Training. These courses and seminars normally

have human rights sessions embedded in the course curricula. Additionally, we received \$3 million in 1206 Counter Terrorism funds; human rights awareness is a mandated component of all these training courses. In FY2009, PME funds rose dramatically to \$18.4 million; we also received another \$2.0 million in 1206 funding. These funds make possible training at military schools in the U.S. as well as Mobile Training Team (MTT) programs in country. The Defense Institute of International Studies (DIILS), an independently funded DOD training institute, also provides another source of USG funded training in Mexico. It will conduct two programs this July in Mexico. In addition, it recently completed a course on the "Legal Aspects of Counter-Terrorism" which included human rights modules.

Current U.S. Initiatives

¶4. (SBU) We are inviting the Mexican military to participate in a number of different human rights related activities, including the following:

-- SEDENA and SEMAR will each send two representatives to the SOUTHCOM Human Rights Conference in Guatemala July 20-24. The ODC is paying for the participants using United States SOUTHCOM Theater Command Activities funds (USSC TCA) specifically allocated for conferences and engagement activities. The cost of SEMAR and SEDENA participation is \$10,000.

-- DIILS is sending academic experts and experienced military officers to conduct in country training on 20-25 July in

MEXICO 00002238 002 OF 003

Mexico City. SEDENA and SEMAR will send ten representatives each. The cost of the engagement is \$45,000 and will be paid through "No Year" IMET funds. The five day course will be in a seminar format specifically focused on human rights issues, including an overview of human rights law, human rights and the U.S. experience, international criminal courts and several small group discussions on various human rights themes.

-- The Western Hemisphere Institute for Security Cooperation (WHINSEC) offered a three-week "Train the Trainer" course in July at Fort Benning, Georgia. SEMAR accepted three slots, but SEDENA declined to send any representatives on the grounds it was having "programming problems." "No year" International Military Education and Training (IMET) funds will pay for this engagement at a cost of \$13,800 or \$4,600 per student. Although the USG offered to pay per diem and lodging, the Mexicans are legally required to pay for their food costs. While it is possible that SEDENA did not have the funds, we are talking about a relatively small amount and it bears noting SEMAR came up with the necessary support funds.

-- DIILS and ODC proposed to SEDENA and SEMAR a subject matter expert exchange in September. Although the topics have not been finalized, tentative agreement on the seminar size and participant rank is complete. We expect that DIILS will send three lawyers to engage with 5-10 high ranking Mexican officials on various subjects to include several human rights related issues. The cost of the program is \$10,000, drawing down "No year" IMET funds.

Future Opportunities

¶5. (SBU) DIILS requested additional money for FY2010 and plans to coordinate with the ODC to focus training in the areas of tactical level operations, rules of engagement (ROE) and basic training on the Law of Armed Conflict. NORTHCOM is proposing training on military justice. Noting U.S. assistance programs in support of reform of the civilians justice system, at least one Mexican military lawyer (JAG equivalent) signaled an interest in our assisting the

military in implementing changes to its military justice system. We are hopeful a fuller discussion of our experience will prompt Mexico's military to tackle these issues with greater focus. The ODC is coordinating with all the U.S. agencies involved with the Merida Initiative (MI) to ensure future military training programs address relevant human rights themes.

Discretion Defines Approach

¶6. (SBU) Post and the ODC exercise significant discretion in approaching SEDENA and SEMAR on human rights related activities given its sensitivity on this matter. Most U.S. training embeds human rights awareness in its curriculum without fanfare. With the rise in reports on the military's involvement in human rights abuses, we have stepped up our outreach on this issue. The Mexicans have proven generally receptive to our offers and appreciate the current level of engagement. In view of the sheer number of activities we are presently undertaking with the Mexicans, however, we run the risk of offering more support than the Mexicans can absorb. As such, we will need to remain systematic and consistent about the opportunities we offer, targeting them to the challenges the Mexican military faces in the field and remaining cognizant of their sensitivity on this subject.

¶7. (SBU) Comment. Notwithstanding rising criticism of its human rights record, the Mexican military continues to enjoy an elevated status in the eyes of the Mexican public. According to most opinion polls, together with the Catholic Church, the military remains one of Mexico's most highly regarded institutions. Much in the spirit of the Merida Initiative (MI) and the cooperation that characterizes this initiative, the Mexican military is increasingly receptive to U.S. offers for training on human rights. Of course, the military may also believe that these programs are the price it has to pay in exchange for the kind of equipment it hopes to receive through MI programs. For all of its readiness to

MEXICO 00002238 003 OF 003

embrace and implement human rights programs, the military remains considerably non-transparent in speaking about abuses and their judicial efforts to address them. This issue is largely a question of transforming the military culture and will take time. Nevertheless, we will continue to steer our human rights programs toward promoting greater transparency and addressing the question of impunity. Visit Mexico City's Classified Web Site at <http://www.state.sgov.gov/p/wha/mexicocity> and the North American Partnership Blog at <http://www.intelink.gov/communities/state/nap/>

FEELEY